

FILE COPY

SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 52nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE held at
CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, W.C.1. FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY,
30th, 31st MARCH & 1st APRIL.

1956

FILE

Attendance during Conference.

	Delegates Present	Branches Represented
First Day :	47	23
Second Day :	41	21
Third Day :	34	19

Branches not in attendance on the First Day :-

Eccels, Glasgow, Kelvingrove, Swansea. (morning session non-attendance) Kingston & Nottingham.

Branches not in attendance on the Second Day :-

Eccels, Glasgow, Kelvingrove, Lewisham, Swansea, West Ham.

Branches not in attendance on the Third Day :-

Eccels, Glasgow, Kelvingrove, Birmingham, Dartford, Leyton, Swansea, Nottingham.

Branches not represented throughout the entire Conference proceedings :- Eccels, Glasgow, Kelvingrove and Swansea.

Conference Sessions.

First Day :	...	...	...	...	11.15.a.m. to 6.p.m.
Second Day :	...	...	...	...	11.45.a.m. to 6.p.m.
Third Day :	...	...	...	...	12 noon to 5.30.p.m.

Conference Expenses.

INCOME :	£	s	:	d	EXPENDITURE :	£	s	:	d
Social & Dance	17	18	:	0	Hall Hire	52	10	:	0
Canteen	3	17	:	10	Caretaker	3	0	:	0
"	4	1	:	0	Band	16	16	:	0
Donation	16	0	:	0	Delegates Ex	2	17	:	6
Collection Fri, 12	12	13	:	6	Advertising	1	17	:	6
Collection Sat, 7	7	10	:	0	Advertising	2	1	:	0
Collection Sun, 6	6	6	:	0	Advertising	1	18	:	6
	£ 68	5	:	4		£ 80	19	:	6
Debit balance	12	14	:	2					
	£ 80	19	:	6					

Conference Chairman - A. George (Bloomsbury)
Vice-Chairman - E. Guy (Lewisham)

STANDING ORDERS Committee acted as TELLERS throughout the entire Conference proceedings.

FIRST DAY - morning session.

REPORT OF THE 52nd EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

Y600 7.14

1. Executive Committee Meetings - No Action.

2. Executive Committee Attendances - No Action.

3. Branches, Membership & Organisation.

page 17

Resolution - EALING BRANCH (floor) "That this Conference deplores the manner in which the Executive Committee handled the complaint of Ealing Branch on the election of Party Officers for 1956."

Ealing Delegate opening discussion Informed Conference that to his knowledge four responsible Party members voted against the appointment of Comrade Lake as Party Treasurer, but now this could never be verified owing to the deplorable state of affairs which has resulted in the returned ballot papers being lost or destroyed.

Islington Delegate Asked if the General Secretary could furnish further information on this matter ?

General Secretary Reported that the returned ballot papers together with the count sheets had been deposited with him after the result had been announced, this was in effect a departure from usual practice, for in past years the Ballot Committee had kept the returned papers locked in the ballot box until the next election, but on this occasion there was already another ballot in progress, therefore the Annual Ballot returns were taken out in order to make room in the box. The Annual ballot returns were bundled up and lodged in a drawer in the General Secretary's office. Since then unused stencilled copies of E.C. and other reports have been bundled up and sent for salvage, its feared that probably the Annual ballot papers were mistakenly added to these items of salvage, as a thorough search of Head Office has not brought the missing papers to light. The General Secretary apologised to Conference for this lapse of efficiency and gave an assurance that steps have been taken to ensure against this matter occurring in the future.

Manchester Delegate We are expected to take the word of the General Secretary for something we have no evidence for.

E.C. Member At the time this was reported to us the E.C. was very perturbed and looked upon this as a serious matter, and we do not intend to let such a thing happen again.

Lewisham Delegate Asked, in the light of the information given if Ealing Branch would be prepared to withdraw their resolution ?

Ealing Delegate No.

E.C. Member I endorse the previous remarks made by the member of the E.C., and whilst I will agree that the matter is serious, I am satisfied that the General Secretary will see that this matter does not occur again, we should not be too hasty to condemn, we should bear in mind that the General Secretary and his Assistant are kept very busy throughout the whole year and mistakes will happen in the best regulated sections, I am fully aware of the General Secretary's desire for an efficiently run Head Office and his efforts to make it so, therefore I accept his apologies.

Wickford Delegate We support the resolution as we feel that it is quite justified in the circumstances.

Ealing Delegate It is no answer saying that mistakes happen.

Bloomsbury Delegate In our view this matter does not warrant a vote of censure, it is clearly an accident. Why worry members who are doing good work, voluntary work for the Party. The decision of the returned poll was decisive enough and the odd votes that Ealing speak of could not have changed the result, Comrade Lake would still have been voted in as Party Treasurer.

Ealing Delegate We are surprised that the Ealing Branch think that if the Ealing Branch have done this

Ealing Delegate winding up discussion In reply to the last speaker we are surprised to hear him say such a thing, we are not complaining about the efficiency of the General Secretary, and we don't think that there has been any 'jiggery pokery'. But we do most certainly deplore that way in which the E.C. handled the matter, and if the E.C. was as concerned about this matter, as two of its members have stated, then why did they not declare the vote void and send to all members fresh voting papers ? We know now that nothing can be done further in this matter except that we must accept the assurances that steps have been taken to ensure against future blunders of this type.

16. Resolution was then put to the vote and CARRIED 20 - 15.

STATISTICS OF MEMBERS Committee reported at 12noon that 42 Delegates were present representing 21 Branches.

Resolution - SOUTHCEND & WICKFORD "That the report be adopted" AGREED

Conference also agreed that the Delegates from Manchester and one Delegate from Southend be allowed to sit, having arrived without credentials.

Islington Delegate Asked permission of Conference to defer his ~~Business~~ ^{Business} ~~Agenda~~ ^{Agenda} (No 2 on the Final Agenda) until another Comrade from the Branch was in attendance, as the present delegation preferred this Comrade to open up for them.

Conference agreed to the request and passed onto next business.

Ealing Delegate - Item 4 (c) We note from the membership figures given in the E.C.'s report that the number remaining at the end of the year is 790, yet we have read in the 'Times' article, that the membership of the Party is 1,000 can we have an explanation ?

Editorial Committee member The 'Times' correspondent was not told by us at the interview that the present membership of the Party was 1,000, but we had given him several items of Party literature including the Anniversary number of the 'Socialist Standard' which quoted in one of the articles the membership as being around 1,000 this was more or less correct at that time.

Item 4 (d) GROUPS : 1 No Action.

Item 4 (d) INTERNAL PARTY JOURNAL : 11 - 'Forum'

Item for discussion G - CAMBERWELL BRANCH "Does the Party need two Journals ?"

Camberwell Delegate opening discussion It is the opinion of my Branch that the Party has no need for two journals, the continuation of 'Forum' must in the long run distract members and sap the writing strength for the 'Socialist Standard'.

I.P.J. Committee member It is not true for members to state that people who write for the 'Forum' could be writing for the 'Standard' instead. In fact it is true to state that the members who write for 'Forum' also do much of the writing for the 'Socialist Standard'.

Lowisham Delegate As we see it, Camberwell Branch are opposed to 'Forum' and not that it is unnecessary. We consider that it is necessary and therefore will argue for the retention of 'Forum'.

Paddington Delegate We are not married to the idea of retaining 'Forum', we would be happy as a Branch to support Camberwell's other item for discussion for a more frequent journal, and would do all we could to support such a venture.

At the request of a number of Delegates, the General Secretary to Conference the circular letter sent by Camberwell Branch to branches concerning this item for discussion.

Wickford Delegate Can we be informed if the sales of 'Forum' are increasing or decreasing?

A report containing information on 'Forum' sales was read.

Worcester Delegate Whilst not necessarily agreeing with Camberwell view, we are of the opinion that 'Forum' should be discontinued. As we consider that at present all efforts should be concentrated on the 'Socialist Standard'.

I.P.C. Committee member 'Forum' runs at a loss of £4.10.0d per month. Many of the regular contributors to 'Forum' have now convinced themselves that they disagree with the Party and have left. The task of writing the present 'Forum' falls to a few members only, and they also contribute regularly to the 'Standard', and in the best of my knowledge always put the requirements of the 'Socialist Standard' first and 'Forum' last.

Southend Delegate Personally, I would endorse the remarks of the previous speaker.

Leighfield Delegate We do need two journals, we need one for general propaganda and the other to keep informed members of the heavier theoretical matters.

Wickford Delegate We are of the opinion, that is members want to continue with the publication of 'Forum', then the price of its production must be borne by those members. The Party must not be put in the position of being constantly called upon to meet a deficit however small it may be.

Bloomsbury Delegate When 'Forum' is no longer wanted, the members will soon let you know, and they will get rid of it as quickly as they set it up.

I.P.C. Committee member This discussion has shown two views on 'Forum'. Some consider that it is a luxury and others who will oppose it on any grounds. But we should seriously consider if 'Forum' still continues to serve a useful need, we consider that it does, we say that it has yet to develop into a controversial journal, the principles of the Party have never been really criticised in 'Forum' for I do not consider that the cheap mud-slinging of recent date, that some like to refer to as the controversy was really controversial in character. In fact it is my opinion, that if younger members of the Party had received better education within the Party and had been better informed as to the Party position, the recent troubles could not have arisen, but we must face the facts, members were not able to combat these false arguments, hence they flourished for a while. 'Forum' could serve a useful purpose to the Party as an educational as well as a controversial paper, therefore I ask you to reconsider your attitude to 'Forum' and give it a chance to show its worth.

Hornsey Delegate We are not concerned over the cost of 'Forum' we are concerned with the principle, and because of its very nature we want to see it discontinued. We will agree that some of the recent articles have been very good and helpful to members, but they could have easily have gone into the 'Socialist Standard'.

E.C. Member I do not accept the view that if we discontinue 'Forum' we are unscientific. But if we reject the 'Socialist Standard' as a theoretical journal, we are taking up the intellectual view that there are two classes of people to whom we put forward our principles. 'Forum' has served its useless purpose, and should go.

Resolution - H. CKNY BRANCH (Instructed - No 11 on Final Agenda) "That this Conference recommends that in view of the changed character of 'Forum', and of the disclaimer which appears at the foot thereof, the sale of 'Forum' be permitted to the general public and it be exhibited at public meetings"

Amendment - FULHAM BRANCH (Instructed) "That the following be added - "and that advertisements be accepted" LOST 5 - 50:

Resolution LOST 18 - 35.

Resolution - HAMPSTEAD BRANCH (Floor) "That this Conference recommends the Executive Committee to abolish 'Forum' forthwith"

Amendment - PADDINGTON BRANCH (Floor) "That Hampstead Branch's resolution be amended to read - "That this Conference recommends that 'Forum' be discontinued as a separate publication provided that its theoretical and controversial character be incorporated in the 'Socialist Standard' " Amendment LOST by a LARGE MAJORITY.

Resolution LOST by a LARGER MAJORITY.

Resolution - SOUTHERN BRANCH (Floor) "That this Conference recommends the Executive Committee to call a Party Poll on the matter of discontinuing the publication of 'Forum' " LOST by a LARGE MAJORITY.

Morning session of the 1st day now stood adjourned.

Afternoon session recommenced at 2.p.m.

Business under discussion - Membership & Organisation.

Resolution - BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Instructed - No 1 on Final Agenda) "That this Conference affirms that the attitude of the Party towards the problems inherent in the Capitalist system is : That such problems are not capable of solution within the framework of capitalism and must by the very nature of the system tend always to intensify, affecting with increasing severity increasing numbers of mankind and making necessary as a condition of survival the abolition of Capitalism and the establishment of Socialism"

Amendment - KELVINGROVE & FULHAM BRANCHES (Instructed) Delete all after the word 'Capitalism' in line four.

Birmingham Delegate opening discussion If the amendment is carried it completely defeats the purpose of the resolution, rendering it pious. We wish to hear other delegates comments first before we discuss further.

Bloomsbury Delegate Could the report of the Editorial Committee on the Lawler affair be read ?

Birmingham Delegate We do not need to hear the report read, we disagree with the Editorial Committee's arguments in answer to ex-member Lawler, on Wars and Slumps.

Editorial Committee member We would point out to Conference that no statement is contained in our reply that says Wars will get worse.

Paddington Delegate If we pass this resolution we put ourselves in the position of saying that all problems whatever they are, are insoluble. This of course includes things like traffic problems, and is absurd.

Leyton Delegate What we should deal with is the causes of wars and slumps, in my opinion T. Lawler would be better fitted if he were in the Peace Pledge Union.

Camberwell Delegate I am beginning to have some doubts, it seems that as soon as we get rid of one bout of controversy another begins to rear its head.

Hampstead Delegate We must take up a Marxist position and pass the resolution as it stands.

Southend Delegate The H-bomb is one example of the warning Capitalism.

Paddington Delegate It seems that if we pass this resolution, will be adding another principle.

Wickford Delegate The wording of this resolution is perfectly accurate.

E.C. Member We cannot make a generalisation of such a thing, take unemployment; war preparation virtually eliminates it, and today is hardly a problem.

Manchester Delegate I think the last speaker is quibbling, Capitalism's problems do intensify.

E.C. Member The resolution is so framed that one can place more than one interpretation on it, never have the workers been in such a precarious position with regards to destruction, yet the Napoleonic Wars were far more destructive of human life than the second world war. Marx was right, we should stick to generalisations and not wander into the realms of prophecy, if we take up the line of making prophecies we are already dead.

E.C. Member We have a watertight case against Capitalism, regardless of this proposition.

Non-Delegate I consider that no case has so far been made out by the movers of this resolution.

The Amendment was then put to the vote and CARRIED 27 - 25.
The resolution as Amended was put and CARRIED 34 - 13.

STANDING ORDERS Committee reported at 3.30.p.m. that 43 Delegates were present representing 22 Branches.

Resolution - HAMPSTEAD & PADDINGTON "That the report be adopted"
AGREED.

Item for discussion A.&B. on the final Agenda was now taken.
A. - BIRMINGHAM BRANCH "That attitude of the Editorial Committee towards Wars and Slumps as outlined in the report to the Executive Committee on Lawler's open letter"

E. - MANCHESTER BRANCH "Do slumps and wars become worse under Capitalism?"

Birmingham Delegate opening discussion We are in general agreement with the Editorial Committee, in thinking that this was just another one of those controversies that are raised from time to time by ex-members. But we contend that if we cannot state that the problems of Capitalism get worse, we will become a Party of reform.

Manchester Delegate There are three attitudes on this question. Is there anything to prevent members from saying that the problems of Capitalism get worse? I have no evidence that Lawler's contentions are correct. The price of democracy is eternal vigilance, and the Party members concern themselves with these ideas the better. We've got a set line, in regard to articles for the 'Standard'? why was the article referred to by Lawler rejected?

Editorial Committee member Answering the last speaker, we have already outlined in detail the reasons for the article not being published and this information can be read in our report sent to the who accepted it and sent copies to all Branches. But to refresh

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Delegates minds on this matter I will briefly outline the major details of the report. The article in question, did not deal with Wars and Slumps but dealt with a dispute amongst gas workers, two sentences of the article contained statements likley to cause confusion if not fully explained or elaborated on, so the Editorial Committee returned the article to Lawler with their comments and suggested alternatives, the Editorial Committee had no quarrel with the remainder of the article and had the matter set up ready for publication, subject to Lawlers reply and alteration of the two sentences in question. When Lawler eventually did reply he refused to alter the article in any way, therfore the Editorial Committee took the matter to the E.C. who approached Lawler again on the matter informing him that they endorsed the Editorial Committee's comments, Lawler replied, declining to alter the article and demanding that it be not printed.

Ealing Delegate Do we understand from the Manchester Delegate that he is in favour of putting articles in the 'Socialst Standard' which are not agreed with by the majority of the membership ?

Manchester Delegate I am of the opinion that articles should go into the 'Socialist Standard' even if they are not agreed to by the majority of the membership.

Lewisham Delegate Do you want us to say that slumps are going to get worse, if so, how are you going to explain a small slump ?

Hackney Delegate One cannot answer scientific questions with aye or nay. What do you mean by stagnation ? The Capitalist system has not stagnated, this is a misuse of terms, if you state that crises get worse, then you must be prepared to explain why crises don't always get worse.

E.C. Member What do we mean by Wars ? The problems become more and more Intense, we cannot estimate the tendencies of Capitalism we don't know anything about it, nobody here has suggested that things must get worse as time goes by.

E.C. Member It has been said that we erect Aunt Sallies in order to knock them down. But we were answering the points put up by Lawler the Editorial Committee does not lay down restrictions about what should go into the 'Socialist Standard' the E.C. is always consulted if need arises, in this case the Committee sought guidance from the E.C. We say that crises etc., are unpredictable, not that they get worst or better, we do not hold the view that capitalism can solve its problems, in fact these prophecies do not do the Party any good.

The discussion on Wars & Slumps having closed the Conference returned to the Islington Branch resolution that had been deferred from the morning session.

Resolution - ISLINGTON BRANCH (Instructed - No 2 on Final Agenda)

"That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee to investigate and overhaul, if necessary, the structure of the Party, i.e. the number of Branches and the effectiveness of same, with a view to reducing the number where advisable, thus minimising the administrative work, e.g. where two branches are adjacent an amalgamation would probably result in less money being spent and less time of Comrades acting as Branch Officials "

Amendment - FULHAM BRANCH (Instructed) Delete all after the word "same" in line 3.

Islington Delegate opening discussion We are opposed to the amendment.

E.C. Member (speaking at the request of Islington, with Conference permission)

Amalgamation might save money by cutting down the branches in the London Area, and would most certainly reduce the amount of paper work that at present goes out from Head Office to Branches, larger Branches could help towards getting better propaganda results than at present maintained.

Hackney Delegate We have already had a committee set up and investigate this proposal, and their report showed no likelihood of success, I feel that this proposition is largely a waste of Conference time.

Paddington Delegate Amalgamation would be the best way to reduce membership. leave the branches as they are.

Fulham Delegate Some method of making branches more effective in their propaganda work is urgently needed, if anything make them smaller and more of them, the smaller they are the better they work, large branches tend to harbour lazy members.

Voting on the amendment was taken - being LOST 9 - 46.
Voting on the resolution was also LOST 14 - 42.

Resolution - LATINS GREEN (Instructed - 3 on Final Agenda)

"That a New Premises Committee be appointed with a view to obtaining Head Office Premises in a Central part of the London Postal Area" LOST 17 - 27

Resolution - EALING BRANCH (Instructed - 4 on Final Agenda)

"That the 1956 Autumn Delegate meeting be held at 52, Clapham High Street" CARRIED 49 - 6

Resolution - WICCFORD BRANCH (Instructed - 5 on Final Agenda)

"That no member of the Armed Forces can be admitted to membership of the Party and any member of the Party joining the Armed Forces should forfeit his membership" LOST 13 - 41

Resolution - BLOOMSBURY (floor) "That this Conference urges the E.C. to at once go forward with organising a Central London Mass Meeting dealing with the present Russian problems" AGREED.

PROPAGANDA : (General)

Southend Delegate To improve our propaganda we need more speakers and writers, the idea of getting on to the platform and speak is to endeavour to make Party members, it should be the duty of every Party member to make at least one member a year.

Item for discussion I - Camberwell

"The possibility of widening the Party's May Day activity"

Camberwell Delegate It is the view of the Branch that the Party should endeavour to widen its May Day activities, and take full advantage of the advertising scope it provides, we should make an all out effort to place the Party's name before workers who attend May Rallies etc.

Bloomsbury Delegate We should organise something that people could see and follow, don't lets be afraid to make a splash we would I'm sure get results.

Resolution - PADDINGTON BRANCH (floor) "That since the Postmaster General has expressed his willingness to re-open the question of broadcasting facilities for small political parties, this Conference urges the E.C. to re-new efforts to obtain such facilities" AGREED.

Item for discussion J - Hackney "Canvassing"

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Selney Delegate This is the mixture as before argument, if we take up canvassing seriously we could increase the sales of the 'Socialist Standard' by about 1,000 in a couple of years. Some branches were ~~lif~~ showing good results with this section of Party Propaganda.

The Friday session now stood adjourned at 6.p.m.

Saturday Morning session commenced at 11-45.a.m.

Business under discussion 52nd. E.C. Report. - Premises.

Woolwich Delegate Asked why there was no report on Premises. ~~and what has been~~ done about obtaining estimates from Agents for new premises.

Premises committee were not present to answer. The question was noted.

Finance - A ppndix 'B' on Final Agenda.

Manchester Delegate Questioned the loss on Dues.

In the absence of the Party Treasurer E.C. member Comrade Lawrence gave some information - the delegate from Manchester intimated that he was satisfied with the reply.

Ealing Delegate We are satisfied that the E.C. have done all they can to effect collection of dues, the Master form 'C' not issued this year was of great use to the Conference, therefore the E.C. should try to get one out each year.

Resolution - EALING BRANCH (floor) "That this Conference regrets the non-publication of the annual summary of Forms 'C'". AGREED.

PUBLICITY:

Item for discussion - K - Lewisham Branch

"The advisability of advertising on London Transport"

At the request of Delegates the General Secretary outlined the scheme approved by the E.C. for advertising on certain 'bus and train routes of London Transport, he read to Conference the relevant E.C. reports and Reports and quotations from the Publicity Committee.

Resolution - EALING & HAMPSTEAD (floor) "That consideration of the amendments to Rules be deferred until the afternoon session" AGREED.

Resolution - CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Instructed - 12 on Final Agenda)

"That the Parliamentary Committee have continuous control of all monies donated to the Parliamentary Fund subject only to the supervision of the Executive Committee".

Camberwell Delegate opening discussion We are of the firm opinion that the Parliamentary Committee should be a working committee, and should be preparing those constituencies to be contested between elections, and we are of the opinion that all monies donated for Parliamentary activity should only be used for that purpose.

Manchester Delegate The party should not be tied down to one particular kind of activity, all money donated or collected for the Party should go into one fighting fund for Socialism, in fact into the General Fund.

Hampstead Delegate We are generally agreed with the Camberwell Branch's proposition, in fact we are of the opinion that other funds should be raided to help the Parliamentary fund rather than the reverse.

Ealing Delegate There is something in Camberwell's arguments, but what purpose is served in having separate funds?

Resolution - Wickford & Islington "Next Business"
LOST by a LARGE MAJORITY.

Resolution - Hampstead "That the vote be taken"
CARRIED by a LARGE MAJORITY.

Resolution No 12 was now voted on and LOST 14 - 36

Resolution - BRADFORD BRANCH (Instructed - 13 on Final Agenda)

"That this Conference recommends that a series of small posters - foolscap size - be produced for bill-posting".

Manchester Delegate Asked, is it true that bill-posting is illegal?
- He was informed by the Chairman that it was not, were he suggesting fly-posting then it would be true to say that it was illegal.

Southernd Delegate This is not an important issue, branches can do this locally. This need not have appeared on Conference Agendas.

Camberwell Delegate We must at all times get the Party's name before the public, and no method is too trivial.

Islington Delegate This resolution is meaningless.

Voting was taken on the resolution and CARRIED
21 - 7.

AMENDMENTS TO RULE were now considered (Instructed)

Hampstead & S.W. London "That Rule 20 be deleted"

S.W. London "That Rules 4,8,14,15,16,18,26,31,32, & 33 be amended"

N.B. The deletion of Rule 20 would do away with the Autumn Delegate Meeting and the list of supplementary amendments seeks to delete all reference from the rules to delegate meetings.

Hampstead Delegate We hope this amendment is carried as we feel that at the present time Delegate Meetings are largely a waste of time and money could be more usefully spent on other Party activities.

Southend Delegate Hampstead's contribution is a most retrogressive step, we are certainly going to oppose this amendment to Rule 20.

S.W. London Delegate. If members want the Delegate meetings to continue they should support them, in the past few years very few members have attended, and last year the attendance was terrible.

Manchester Delegate We must oppose this retrograde step, if we discontinue them now we may not be able to re-commence them at a future date.

Kingston Delegate We should make the E.C. report to us more often, we should attend our meetings and hammer out Party Policy etc.; not keep sniping, we should get ourselves and the E.C. on its toes.

E.C. Member Delegate meetings are very necessary, I personally welcome them they enable the Party membership to keep in touch.

Amendment to Rule 20 was now put to the vote and LOST 23 - 31

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Agreed by Conference that in the light of the previous
resolution that the other amendments relating to the Delegate
branch automatically falls.

Southend & Wickford "That Rule 22 be amended to read as
follows:- Each branch shall be entitled to send three delegates
to the Annual Conference, irrespective of size of branch, Delegates
must have been members for at least six months proceeding the
Conference. Delegates shall not vote on matters arising from the
agenda, but shall take full notes of the proceedings. The Executive
Committee shall then circulate to all branches a report of the
Conference discussions not later than six weeks after the said
Conference, together with a ballot paper containing all resolutions
and amendments which shall be voted on at a special meeting to be
held at each Branch within four weeks of the receipt of the report.
The Ballot Committee shall add the total of votes in respect of
each resolution and the decision be made on the basis of a simple majority"

Amendment - Fulham Branch Delete in line one "three delegates" and
substitute instead "two delegates" LOST 13 - 39.

Amendment LOST 23 - 31.
to Rule 22

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE reported at 2.30.p.m. that 41 delegates
were present representing 21 Branches.

Resolution - Kingston & Paddington "That the report be adopted"
AGREED.

Islington Branch Rule 26 That lines 6 & 8 commencing "The Executive
Committee" and ending "of Ballot Papers" be deleted. Also the
subsequent sentence commencing "At such meetings" and ending "be
tabled"

Voting was taken on the Islington amendment to Rule 26 being
LOST 6 - 40

Camberwell Branch That rule 28 be amended by deleting all after
the word "Constituency" in line 4 in order that the Party can contest
where there are less numbers than necessary"

Camberwell Delegate We are fully aware that we want Socialists to
sign nomination papers, but we are of the opinion that not only
Party members are socialists, and therefore we should allow non-
party sympathizers known to support the party to sign nomination
papers.

Voting was taken on amendment to rule 28 and LOST 19 - 32.

LITERATURE:

Hampstead Delegate Asked if anything had been done with regard to
the use of newsprint (see item 6b on E.C. report to Conference)

Editorial Committee member informed the Delegate and Conference
of the steps being taken with regard to obtaining samples of news-
print and other cheaper papers and reminded the Conference that
the matter was still under consideration with the E.C.

Resolution - Paddington Branch (floor) "That this Conference
recommends that the series of articles on 'Crises' which appeared
in 'Forum', be concluded, suitably amended to form a composite whole,
and published as a pamphlet by the Party"

Paddington Delegate We are of the opinion that the subject is of
importance to the Party, and that this question of 'Crises' is going
to be a topical question in the near future. We have nothing avail-
able for the Party on this subject, therefore it is our view that
this is the best kind of pamphlet that the Party could publish at
the moment.

The resolution was put to the vote and CARRIED with one dissentient.

Item for discussion E - Paddington Branch

"The 'Socialist Standard' - its function and scope"

Paddington Delegate opening discussion. The 'Socialist Standard' contents have changed, but the outside has no explanation for these changes, it must have variety, which at present it lacks.

Hackney Delegate Who are the people who think we have changed our views? I certainly would not like to see these articles, say, opposing the Declaration of Principles, in the 'Socialist Standard'.

Bloomsbury Delegate The younger members of the Party could re-read the old 'Standards' they are not fundamentally wrong, in particular the woman question.

Hackney Delegate We don't think the "S.S." should be published more frequently.

Fulham Delegate The 'Socialist Standard' has only a limited appeal to the converted, because it is not topical, we can only be topical by publishing a weekly paper, and that at present is not possible.

Bradford Delegate but we should still try to make the "S.S." more topical

Paddington Delegate We should have a page of Correspondence, letters from the public and such like.

Southend Delegate We should have a much bigger 'Socialist Standard' why not go back to the sort of paper we got out in 1914?

Paddington Delegate The 'Socialist Standard' won't give you a clear picture of the Party's past.

Manchester Delegate We are opposed to a more frequent 'Socialist Standard' on the grounds of practicability.

Ealing Delegate Before we can talk of the increase in the size of the 'Socialist Standard' we should consider the increase in its sales.

Editorial Committee member It would be very bad to have controversial articles in the "S.S.", the Editorial have always appealed and continue to appeal to members to specialise on different subjects, and to write on them, correspondents never seem to write short letters rather they write lengthy articles.

Editorial Committee member If you cut "S.S." in half you will not cut the costs by half, if you have a weekly, you have got to solve the problem by distributing it, you would have to have someone full time at Head Office and a full time paid editor.

Resolution - Ealing Branch (Instructed 6 on Final Agenda)

"That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee to set up a Central Literature Sales Committee with the following terms of reference (1) to consist of five members (2) to report at least once a month to the Executive Committee (3) the Committee to supersede all existing Literature Committees (4) to control the number of Socialist standards produced each month, their distribution and all publicity (5) to increase the sale of the Socialist Standard and other Literature by stimulating Branch efforts in canvassing and all other methods (6) to keep records of all sales and present a statistical summary with their report to each Annual Conference"

Amendment - S.W.London Branch Delete in line 4 the word "month" and insert instead the word "quarter".

on motion of the discussion. The resolution is self-explanatory. In view of the amendment, we are of the opinion that a monthly report is necessary.

Mr. This committee is going to take an unusual step, it is taking the decisions regarding the 'Socialist Standard' out of the hands of the Executive Committee which is a precedent that we do not agree with.

Mr. Number. It is not a wise method to lay down instructions with regard to such a committee, it seems to show that you are dissatisfied with your Executive Committee.

Mr. Fulham Branch. Fulham Branch feels no antagonism towards the E.C. on this matter all we want is a centralised committee.

Amendment was put to the vote and LOST 21 - 26

Original motion put to the vote and CARRIED 46 - 6

Resolution - Fulham Branch (Instructed - 7 on Final Agenda)

"That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee to set up a sub-committee of the Executive Committee responsible for advertising in the 'Socialist Standard'." LOST 7 - 47

Resolution - Hackney Branch (Instructed - 8 on Final Agenda)

"That this Conference urges the Executive Committee to publish a series of introductory leaflets, either for free distribution, or for a small price, suitable for Branch canvassing and distribution at public meetings".

Amendment - Fulham Branch (Instructed) Delete in line 1 the word "Urges" and insert instead the word "instructs".

Amendment - Kelvin Grove (Instructed) Delete in lines 2 and 3 the words "either free" and "for a small price".

Amendment - Lewisham Branch (Instructed) That this Conference urges the Executive Committee to give consideration to the publication of Party leaflets suitable for Branch canvassing and distribution at public meetings, for which a small charge is to be made".

Voting was taken as follows :- Lewisham Amendment LOST 9 - 40

Amendment Kelvin Grove LOST 17 - 33 Amendment Fulham LOST 21 - 27

Original motion Hackney CARRIED 28 - 22.

Resolution - Bloomsbury Branch (Instructed - 9 on Final Agenda)

"That in the opinion of this Conference literature of the leaflet type is extremely useful in the propaganda work of the Party, and the Executive Committee are requested to take all possible steps to increase the present range of such literature" CARRIED 46 - 8

Resolution Bradford Branch (Instructed 10 on Final Agenda)

"That this Conference regrets that no action has been taken regarding the publication of a series of leaflets on the lines suggested by the Bradford Branch" CARRIED 15 - 12

The Saturday session now stood adjourned at 6.p.m.

Third and last session commenced at 12 noon Sunday

STANDING COUNCIL COMMITTEE. A verbal report shortly after 12 noon.

A letter was read from Kelvin Grove Branch expressing their reasons for not being able to attend Conference, and asking for their votes to be recorded.

Islington Delegate It should be the policy of the E.C. to inquire of existing Provincial Branches, to see if they require any expenses for delegates etc.

Resolution - HACKNEY BRANCH (floor) "That this Conference recommends that the E.C. write to Glasgow and Kelvin Grove Branches regretting that they were unable to send delegates to Annual Conference, and also that the time was too late to be recorded. We also suggest that in future years the E.C. offers to pay all expenses including lost time at work to enable at least one Delegate to attend"

CARRIED with one dissentient

E.C. Member Now that the Party is committed to the idea of leaflets we'll have to try to find some fresh avenues of propaganda.

Bloomsbury Delegate In the past the E.C. did not wait to be told, if anything were the E.C. got something out quickly. You have the remedy in your hands, issue articles which have been written recently.

E.C. Member I would not like to see a resolution from the floor limiting the type of leaflet that we can produce. To date I have done the drawings in the S.S. I think it would be a good idea if those members who are capable of drawing, were to put their names forward, so that a list of such members could be drawn up.

Classes Organisor Gave detailed information on the new syllabus and Party education generally, he explained that one of the main problems was the serious shortage of Party Tutors. Nothing was done last year because members had shown little response.

Lewisham Delegate The whole success of the classes will depend largely on the interest shown by members.

Islington Delegate I should like to see reports of these classes published in the 'Forum'.

Manchester Delegate I wonder if some method could be evolved, so that Provincial members could take part in this course of studies if a bibliography of the classes could be sent to Provincial Branches this would be a help to members.

E.C. Member We must also consider that there has been no writers class for some time now, and such a class can be carried on by correspondence classes should not be confined just to London, but if support is not given such a scheme is a waste of time, many members would not be so embarrassed in answering questions if they had the knowledge, which so many members lack, the aim of these classes is to guide members in their reading as much as anything else.

West Ham Delegate Does the Classes Organisor feel that the situation of Head Office at Clapham militates against educational classes? Would trying a more Central spot help to stimulate members interest?

Classes Organisor A more Central place might help, its possible that the journey to Head Office puts off some members who reside in North London.

Bloomsbury Delegate This syllabus shows promise of producing some more speakers and writers for the Party.

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Palmers Green Delegate I attended at the Great Dover Street classes but if I had been expected to travel to Clapham High Street I would certainly have missed some of the classes.

Hackney Delegate If members are interested enough they will overcome all difficulties, but if it helps to make zonal arrangements I'm sure they could be arranged.

Non-Delegate Study circles could be set up in the Provinces. Some Provincial members tend to feel they are being neglected and here is where help from London Comrades can be given through correspondence courses.

Secretary Provincial members have not been forgotten, its tape recorders at the classes and spools could be sent to provincial branches, also a condensed collection of all the material to be prepared for publication in 'Forum'. This is a syllabus and members attending should find it extremely

I live a considerable distance from Head Office and like the members this is an important consideration, but I think it will be difficult to get a central place. Members know where Head Office is and if they have the will they will most certainly find their way round any difficulty. The use of a recorder is something Provincial Branches could look into.

Resolution - West Ham & Palmers Green Branches (floor)

"That this Conference recommends the E.C. to consider the possibility of hiring a room at Conway Hall for holding classes"

CARRIED 13 - 3.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE reported at 3.p.m. that 34 Delegates were present representing 19 Branches.

Resolution - Lewisham & West Ham "That the report be adopted" AGREED.

West Ham Delegate In the past few years classes have not been too successful, hence the reason for our wanting to try this new venture.

Item for discussion L - PADDINGTON BRANCH "The Value of Summer Schools"

Resolution - PADDINGTON BRANCH (floor) "That this Conference recommends that the E.C. should endeavour to organize a summer school this year"

Paddington Delegate opening discussion We are of the opinion that such schools are useful to the Party and help to create a social spirit amongst members, we also throw out the suggestion that the schools are held at different places each year, perhaps near to provincial branches.

Islington Delegate Like the previous speaker I can't stress the social side of the Party enough, and hope that these schools will again be started. The social activity of the Party is in my opinion very important.

Lewisham Delegate I Agree that it would be of some use if the schools were run at a different place each year near to provincial branches.

Paddington Delegate It might be a good idea to run a school near to Nottingham, but I do not think it would be too wise to run schools too far from London, as it would deter many members from attending.

Voting was taken on the resolution and CARRIED nom com.

ORGANISATIONS OVERSEAS

Overseas Secretary gave a detailed and lengthy report on the activities in some of the Companion Parties.

General Secretary read to Conference fraternal Greetings from Comrades in Vienna and the Socialist Party of Ireland and from Comrade Hart in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Resolution - Islington & Hampstead (floor) "That this Conference instructs the General Secretary to send fraternal greetings to all Companion Parties, to Comrade Frank in Vienna and others sending greetings".

AGREED.

Hampstead Delegate Can any E.C. members give me a reply as to why nothing has been done, or if anything has been done, - what? with regards to the Socialist Party of New Zealand and the Party Poll on

membership and the Declaration of Principles.

General Secretary Read to Conference all the relevant correspondence on the matter and outlined the E.C. decisions to date.

E.C. Member It is not enough to wait for a reply from Wellington Branch, to our letter which they have so far ignored. This Conference should recommend the E.C. to write to them again, for they have questioned the right of the Party to take a poll of the Party, the E.C. should in my opinion immediately re-open the matter and get a decision one way or the other.

Resolution - HAMPSTEAD BRANCH (floor) "That this Conference views with concern the criticisms by the S.P.N.Z. of the 1955 Party Poll on the D. of P. and membership of the Party, and recommends the E.C. to give this matter its urgent attention to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion!"

Hampstead Delegate opening discussion Wellington Branch do not accept the question posed in the Party Poll, therefore members of the Party will be condoning the attitude of the S.P.N.Z. if they agree with them that members can remain in the Party if they accept the object but want to reject the Declaration of Principles in whole or in part.

Islington Delegate We were concerned with those members who had shown themselves to be in opposition to the Party but not necessarily to those who had some disagreement, many members of the Party have disagreement over some aspects of the Party case, and this may be possibly true of the S.P.N.Z. members.

E.C. Member I am of the opinion that some members are not fully informed of the position, it is not a year since the E.C. wrote to the S.P.N.Z. and incidentally, the S.P.N.Z. have not received an atom of support from any of the other Companion Parties. No, they have not dis-associated themselves from the Party, they have only done what a lot of other members have done, that is to dis-associate themselves from a certain decision taken by the Party, I urge that we wait and see what happens in the future with this matter.

Hampstead Delegate We can only conclude from the last speakers' remarks, that a nice red herring has been drawn across the trail.

Paddington Delegate We have no wish to see this controversy brought up again, the Party is in bad enough shape here, without starting a witch-hunt overseas.

E.C. Member If this is an issue of any importance the E.C. will deal with it, I suggest to you that the E.C. has taken the sensible line in this matter, and I therefore ask you to endorse their actions. we think that the matter should now end, as far as the Party is concerned, the E.C. have made our position clear to Wellington, no other Companion Parties have disagreed with the Principles, therefore we hold that there is no case for saying that they are not in line with us, as it is at the moment they are a Socialist Party as we are here, and I for one see no further evidence to the contrary.

Lewisham Delegate I think that the Paddington Delegates approach is a cowardly one, and I deny that the Party is in bad shape.

E.C. Member Without being too emotional, we might just as well face up to the fact that we hear an echo coming from a long way off, and we should face it with a sense of proportion, the E.C. has already written to Wellington, and they have not forgotten the matter. If we were to come out and rejected the S.P.N.Z. some would consider that as clarifying the matter, I suggest you let well alone, as even Socialists a long way away, are liable to get things wrong.

E.C. Member It is implicit in the S.P.N.Z. letter that they are opposing the D. of P., therefore we have on record the letter from a Companion Party declaring that they will dis-associate themselves

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from us if we do not change our decision, I claim that it is better to have two Socialists who understand than a thousand members who are wobbling about. If a member of the working class came to Islington Branch and said they agreed with the Declaration of Principles but not with clause 6 what would they do?

Paddington Delegate I am sorry if my statement that the Party is in bad shape has been taken by some members to mean something which I had not in mind, I only mean by that statement that we have enough to do here at the moment.

Hackney Delegate The only action we can take is when members show they definitely disagree with the Party, I say let them take the first step.

Hampstead Delegate winding up discussion I am still of the opinion that the E.C. has forgotten about the matter, and if there are 115 non-socialists in the Party I want to see them out, when we find out what the S.P.N.Z. is going to do, then we can deal with Fulham Branch who have supported the view of Wellington, I cannot see how E.C. members can support a decision to let the matter wait, in the light of what the letter stated.

Voting was taken on the resolution and it was LOST 6 - 20.

Item for discussion C - ISLINGTON BRANCH "Correspondence with Overseas Parties and Contacts"

The Overseas Secretary gave detailed information relating to Correspondence.

Hackney Delegate (recently joined from S.P.I.) It seems that the majority of the Socialist Party of Ireland have now joined the S.P.G.B. but there are still many staunch members in Ireland, and I have regular correspondence with them, they are continuing to hold meetings at the Boilermaker Hall in Dublin, and recently I was able to pin up at Head Office a series of newspaper cuttings which mentioned these meetings and other activities of the Irish Comrades.

Islington Delegate Would it not be a good idea to pin up the names of overseas contacts so that members could regularly correspond with fellow socialists overseas.

Conference Chairman now called upon the Conference for the adoption of the Executive Committee's report.

Resolution - Lewisham & Islington "That the report be adopted"
AGREED.

OTHER BUSINESS :

Belling Delegate We wish to raise the matter relating to the E.C.'s decision with regard to the request from a Mr. Halliwell.

We understand from the correspondence that Mr. Halliwell wrote requesting that he may study Party documents for the preparation of a thesis, the E.C.'s answer was not only, in our opinion, unnecessarily terse, but dangerous, as it could be misinterpreted. The E.C. said in its reply that we can have no control over Mr. Halliwell, of course this also applies to the recent interview with the 'Times' correspondent. We have boasted thousands of times at our meetings that we have nothing to hide and that all our information in relation to the Party is open to inspection, how are we going to square this with the Halliwell affair? We are agreed that it might be difficult to provide facilities but if that is the only reason, why was this action taken by the E.C.?

Non-Delegate I was a member of the E.C. that passed that decision, but I disagreed with it, we threw away the chance of cheap advertisement.

Islington Delegate We are of the opinion that if a Party member were to write such a thesis, we stand a chance of getting some propaganda value out of it.

E.C. Member There is one thing we have always guarded very carefully, that is our reputation, the danger lies in the fact that an outsider could place a very different interpretation on the Part's case.

Lowisham Delegate I think we are making a great deal of fuss about this matter, and to no purpose.

E.C. Member I fully support the resolution passed by the E.C. on Mr. Halliwell, the difference between this matter and the 'Times' was that we knew what the 'Times' wanted, but we did not know what Mr. Halliwell wanted we only knew that he was a schoolmaster, that he had one degree and wanted another in order to get more money. We are not in a position to grant him facilities for study, that could last for many months or a couple of years at least, with the chance being that his finished thesis if accepted and published might be derogatory to us.

E.C. Member I agree wholeheartedly with the views of Shilling Branch, and if someone does write a thesis that is derogatory to us we must accept it, any publicity is better than none.

Paddington Delegate I think that Ealing Branch's views are valid, a historian should be an impartial observer, we should not be worried by what they might say, we have enough propaganda experience to refute any misunderstandings.

Ealing Delegate winding up discussion We are informed from that platform that our intended resolution is ruled out of order, but many irrelevances have been brought in during this discussion. We have nothing further to say as we are satisfied that we have made known our displeasure.

Conference adjourned at 5.45.p.m. having dealt with the E.C. report and all items on the Final Agenda.

General Secretary..

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